

Harmony Is Possible

Below will be found a statement addressed to the Democrats of Nebraska, suggesting a basis upon which the two factions of the Democratic party that have been antagonizing each other for a number of years over the issues of prohibition and woman's suffrage might find it possible to unite and present a solid front to the Republicans on current issues.

It is Mr. Bryan's intention to give out later statements discussing the matter of candidates and also platforms. Mr. Bryan's first statement which we reproduce only covers the senatorship. It is as follows:

"I have received so many inquiries from Democratic men and women in Nebraska, asking my opinion on matters pertaining to the Democratic political situation in Nebraska, making suggestions and urging that certain steps be taken, that I have decided to present through the daily press in a frank manner my views as to the political situation and offer some suggestions which may throw some light on the situation.

"The people need the Democratic party at this time to stop the extravagance and inefficiency of the present Republican administration and to reduce the operating expenses of the state government so as to bring the people's taxes within their ability to pay. The essential questions upon which the people are asking for information on and which I expect to discuss are: Can the Democratic party win in Nebraska this year? Can all elements of the Democratic party be united into one fighting force for good? Can Senator Hitchcock be re-elected to the United States senate? What kind of a ticket and what kind of a platform will it require to bring about Democratic success and bring about relief to the taxpayers?

"For the past few years there have been two factions in the Democratic party. One faction, known as the dry progressive Democratic faction, and the other, the wet conservative Democratic faction. These factions, however, were commonly known as the Hitchcock and Bryan factions.

"The liquor question has been settled in Nebraska by a prohibition constitutional amendment which the most optimistic wet does not expect to be repealed. The same is true in the nation, but the matter of the enforcement of prohibition has been made an issue throughout the United States by the wets. The people of Nebraska are not willing to take any backward step on what has already been accomplished along moral political lines. For the Democratic party to win in Nebraska, it is not only necessary for all elements of the Democratic party to be united, but it is also necessary to draw to the Democratic party a large block of Republican votes.

"I believe that the Democratic party can be united on an honorable basis. I believe it is possible to re-elect Senator Hitchcock to the United States senate.

"I am not authorized to speak for the progressive Democratic men and women of Nebraska on political subjects, but I have actively participated with them in their contests in this state and believe that I have a fair knowledge of their mental attitude towards present political conditions and possible candidates. I am not authorized to speak for Senator Hitchcock, but I am going to suggest what I believe would be an honorable and practical basis upon which the Democratic forces of Nebraska could work together. Assuming that Senator Hitchcock intends to file as a Democratic candidate for re-election, and knowing that a representative of the state must represent the sentiment of the state, I assume that the senator, in announcing his candidacy, would announce his acceptance of the prohibition and suffrage issues as already settled by the voters of this state and pledge himself to vote and use his influence in the senate, if elected, to uphold the well known sentiment of Nebraska, which is opposed to any modification which would weaken the Volstead act, and that he would support a liberal appropriation for the enforcement of prohibition. I believe that such an attitude on his part as far as national legislation is concerned would be satisfactory to all elements of the party in Nebraska, but in order to remove the question of prohibition as an issue which has divided the party and in order to keep the prohibition question out of the present state campaign, and as an assurance of the acceptance by Senator Hitchcock and his paper, the World-Herald, that the prohibition question is settled, they should be willing to help draft a state ticket and support it in the primary composed of the strong, progressive, dry

Democratic men and women. Senator Hitchcock has proven his ability. No one questions his courage. His acquaintance and leadership in the United States senate can be of great value to the people of Nebraska if he and his paper bring themselves into accord and accept what has been accomplished in Nebraska by the moral forces of all political parties.

"I believe the above is an honorable, safe and practical basis upon which the Democratic party in Nebraska could be united. If the party could be united on the basis suggested—which gives guarantees to each other that the questions that have divided the party in the past would not again be re-opened—it would only then be a question of drafting a state ticket in Nebraska that would be supported and nominated in the open without any trades or double crosses by party fixers, and then by outlining a progressive legislative program that would specifically state what it meant, how legislative relief and administrative reforms were to be brought about, the Democratic party would again be in a position to serve the people of Nebraska and all elements of the party working together on current problems, I believe would command the support of a great majority of the voters at the coming election.

"In a later statement I will discuss candidates and suggest what it might be possible to do to dispel the present apathy as to candidates, and I will offer some suggestions as to a platform embodying specific legislative relief.

"CHARLES W. BRYAN."

To Elect Mayor by Direct Vote

The readers of The Commoner will recall that about one year ago at the city election of the city of Lincoln, Nebraska, Charles W. Bryan was a candidate for city commissioner with a view to the mayorship. Lincoln has the form of government known as the city commission plan. The charter provides that five councilmen are to be elected and that after they are elected, they select from their number by a majority vote of the council one of their members who shall act as mayor and assign the other four members of the council to other departments of the city's work.

In the city election in Lincoln Mr. Bryan was a candidate on a municipal ownership platform, and his opponent, who was a candidate for the city council with a view to the mayorship, expressed himself as opposed to Mr. Bryan's municipal ownership program. At the election Mr. Bryan received a majority of upwards of 600 votes over his opponent, but both he and his opponent were among the five highest men at the election and therefore were both members of the city council.

In place of carrying out the wishes of the people as expressed at the polls and assigning Mr. Bryan to the position of mayor, the city council, under pressure from the business interests of the city, who were opposed to Mr. Bryan's municipal ownership program, was induced to override the will of the people and to assign Mr. Bryan to the department of streets and public improvements, and selected his opponent for mayor, whom Mr. Bryan had defeated at the polls. The assigning of Mr. Bryan to the department of streets did not prevent him from organizing public sentiment and securing the passage of a municipal coal yard ordinance, the results of which the readers of The Commoner are familiar. The people, however, have resented the action of the council and have demanded that the charter be amended so that they may vote direct for mayor.

At a recent session of the city council Mr. Bryan presented a petition drawn under the initiative and referendum provision of the city charter, and asked that an election be called and that the people be given an opportunity to vote on the suggested amendment to the charter providing for the selection of a mayor. Below will be found Mr. Bryan's statement to the council in presenting the petition. The proposition of amending the charter will probably be presented to the voters and passed upon at their general primary held in Nebraska July 18. Mr. Bryan's statement to the council is as follows:

Lincoln, Nebraska, May 29, 1922.
To the Members of the City Council,
Lincoln, Nebraska.

At the request of a large number of voters of the city of Lincoln I submit herewith a petition which is prepared under the initiative and referendum provision of the city charter and statutes for the purpose of amending the charter of the city of Lincoln. This amendment to the

charter as drawn will permit the people to select whom they want for mayor for the city by direct vote and repeals that provision of the charter which permitted the members of the city council to assign one of their number to the position of mayor after the election of the five councilmen at the city election.

The commission form of government placed the discretion of the assignment of the various heads of the government in the hands of the council so that jobs in certain departments could not be promised in advance. The commission form of government remedied the abuse referred to above but another abuse has grown up under the commission form of government that is more dangerous to the people's interests and more contrary to the American principle of government than the abuse which it was intended to remedy, namely, the overriding of popular government.

As the Lincoln charter requires the mayor to constantly investigate questions of public interest and make recommendations to the council for legislative action, candidates for the city council with a view to the mayorship are expected to outline to the voters the legislative and administrative measures that such candidate if elected would try to have carried out during his administration. The refusal, therefore, of a city council to assign to the mayor's position the candidate for mayor who received the largest vote overrides the public choice for the place and it also places the leadership of mayor in the hands of a person who is opposed to the legislative and administrative program which the majority of the voters had declared in favor of at the polls.

This amendment only provides for the selection of the mayor direct. I am willing to have the amendment to the charter broadened so as to enable the voters to vote direct for the head of each department but this petition only provides for the voting direct for the mayor, and the petitioners request that this amendment to the charter be submitted at the general election known as the state primary election to be held July 18, 1922.

It was only necessary to secure the signatures of about one thousand registered voters to require this amendment to the charter to be submitted at the time indicated above but this petition contains the signatures of upwards of four thousand registered voters, which is not only enough to require the election called but is considerably more than half as many voters as the entire vote cast at the last regular city election.

I do not believe any member of this council or any considerable number of the voters of Lincoln are opposed to permitting the public to select their mayor by direct vote, and I do not believe that any member of the council or any considerable number of citizens will oppose the submission of this amendment at the coming primary election so that the people will have an opportunity to vote on this amendment to the charter at this time.

Attorney General Daugherty is defending against a number of nasty charges by claiming that these attacks are in the interests of the war profiteers whom he has announced his intention of prosecuting. The character of the Democratic senators who have said very plain things about the attorney general does not justify the statement. Here in Nebraska Mr. Daugherty has but very few friends. Daugherty defended the pardon of a Nebraska bank wrecker who was left in prison but forty-four days after the government had fought for seven years to get him inside, and when those familiar with the case challenged his statements and demanded his authority he refused not only to reply, but declined to allow the representatives of the state to examine the papers upon which he based his recommendation for pardon.

The Senate has named a committee to investigate why the price of gasoline has been steadily rising in the face of a largely increased reserve supply. It does not, of course, require a Senate investigation to understand why a monopoly can fix its own price, but there are a number of senators standing for re-election this fall and there are several million automobile owner voters interested in lower prices for gasoline.

It wouldn't be a bad idea for the administration to wait until after the congressional primaries have been held in the various states before appointing all of the special attorneys to conduct the war fraud prosecutions. The chances are that those primaries will greatly increase the lame duck supply and thus make necessary the employment of an additional number of investigators.